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## **THE MONROE POLICE DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES CHAPLAIN PROGRAM**

The City of Monroe Police Department (MPD) is pleased to announce the launch of a Police Chaplain program. The new program partners the MPD with various faith-based leaders of the community to provide support during times of crises, and to serving members of the police department and residents alike with social or spiritual assistance.

The nondenominational, faith-based leaders are available seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, providing appropriate assistance, advice, comfort, counsel and referrals to MPD staff, their families, and members of the public. Additionally, Police Chaplains assist citizens and the MPD with crisis notifications, to provide counsel to family members who have suffered a loss of a loved one, are experiencing personal crossroads, or other traumatic event during times of loss, confusion, depression, and/or stressful situations.

Chief of Police, Charles F. McCormick, IV: "Police work is one of the most demanding and stressful professions, but so often unappreciated. Having someone on your team to talk to about this, not as a fellow officer but as a genuine listener, is invaluable. We are honored and excited to enter into this Chaplain Program to better serve our members and the community they serve."

The Chaplain program is voluntary and Chaplains serve without promise, expectation, or compensation for services rendered. There are a total of six chaplains in the program. Volunteers were chosen based of their response to a letter of inquiry sent to various Houses of Worship throughout the community. To qualify, all Chaplains had to attend mandatory orientation, pass a background check, complete First Responder Basic Training, a Firearms Orientation, and tour Central Dispatch. Additionally, all Chaplains are required to do 'ride-alongs' with patrol officers. Ongoing training and 'ride-alongs' are required to remain a part of the program.

To develop the initial phases of the program, the MPD reached out to now Senior Chaplain, David R. Edwards (Chaplain Edwards). Chaplain Edwards serves as president of [Humanizing the Badge](#), and is the founder of two other nonprofit organizations, The [227 Project](#) and [Call for Backup](#). Chaplain Edwards instructs all over the country to various Law Enforcement, military and other first responders on topics associated with the stresses of being a First Responder. Chaplain Edwards

also serves as an Auxiliary Officer with the Taylor Police Department and is the Deputy Chief and Law Enforcement Liaison for First Responder Chaplains.

Edwards combined experience and qualifications have been instrumental in the formation and direction of the program. Chaplain Edwards was named to be the Senior Chaplain and holds the rank of Captain within the department's Chaplain Program. All volunteer Chaplains come to the department with impressive work backgrounds, experience, training and education.

Senior Chaplain, David R. Edwards: "The other local clergy and I are extremely glad for the opportunity to support our police officers and our community through this program. In a time when the stresses of police work are so great, we hope to be a voice of encouragement for the officers and someone they can trust."

Police Chaplains have been active in the department to date, having now been utilized on two death scenes and have provided counsel to a department member off-duty who requested assistance. As the program moves forward, MPD expects the Chaplains to continue to be called upon for similar circumstances.

Captain Chad Tolstedt, Chaplain program coordinator: "A Chaplain's greatest gift is to be present and listen."

City of Monroe Volunteer Chaplains include: Chaplain (Capt.) David R. Edwards, Life Bridge Church; Pastor Heather Boone, Oaks of Righteousness; Pastor Richard Evans, Monroe Church of the Nazarene; Lynne Goodman, President, Temple of B'Nai Israel; Reverend G.C. "Josh" Henscheid, Solid Rock Church; Reverend Melody VanOudheusden, St. Paul's United Methodist Church.

#### About The City of Monroe

Incorporated in 1817, the City of Monroe is a community that has a shared vision that seeks to balance the opportunities of economic development with the stewardship that is required for historic preservation. With a population of 20,733, Monroe is located about 17-miles north of Toledo, Ohio and about 35-miles south of Detroit. The City of Monroe is Michigan's third oldest community, and is also the county seat of Monroe County.

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